

CHANGES IN II

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NSC BRIEFING

Down Working
18 June 1958

SOVIET CENTRAL COMMITTEE PLENUM

I. Plenum of the Soviet Central Committee is now in session in Moscow. Some announcement on proceedings can be expected within a day or two.

A. Meeting apparently called on short notice--several Soviet ambassadors, including those to three Western powers, left for Moscow in considerable haste.

B. This, plus fact that committee met only last month, indicates that meeting has more than routine significance.

C. None of the Soviet leaders has appeared in public since 12 June, suggesting that important discussions at the Presidium level may have preceded plenum.

II. There are currently several problems outstanding which could emerge at the plenum to produce a new round of political conflict.

A. New 7-year plan--to replace the 6th Five-Year Plan scrapped last year--is due to be completed before 1 July. Discussion of the plan may bring renewed debate over Khrushchev's program for sweeping reorganization of Soviet industry and agriculture, with which there is still a considerable dissatisfaction.

1. Khrushchev has apparently been criticized on this score for he felt obliged, during his recent speech in Bulgaria, to make a broad defense of his methods of operation and to insist that his policies are not inconsistent with Communist dogma.

2. [REDACTED] at the last plenum in May he insisted on receiving a vote of confidence on his reorganization of industry.

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B. Problem of summit negotiations will probably also come up for discussion.

1. Khrushchev's 11 June letter indicates a Soviet desire to break off preparatory talks at the ambassadorial level. He is probably seeking new tactics in an attempt to force a foreign ministers' meeting on Soviet terms.
2. Khrushchev's personal prestige is closely linked to the objective of securing an early summit conference.

C. The execution of Nagy in Hungary carries Moscow even further back toward a "stalinist" policy in Eastern Europe and may signal the end of Khrushchev's attempts since 1954 to put Soviet control there on a less rigid footing.

1. We think Khrushchev has attempted to get out from under on this issue by taking the initiative in seeking a tough policy toward Tito and the Satellites.

D. Plenum may also be asked to take action against Bulganin and Suslov.

V. On the surface, Khrushchev appears to be in a strong position. There are continued signs, however, of cross-currents within the hierarchy. As long as some resistance to his leadership remains, as it apparently does, he always runs a risk in exposing his policies to discussion before a body like the Central Committee, which is large (250), full of vested interests and not composed completely of obedient Khrushchev adherents.

A. Situation is somewhat reminiscent of that last June, when Malenkov, Molotov and Co. were kicked out. We would not be surprised if there were a similar explosion this time.